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FIRST NOTES

MOVING FORWARD, THE OTHER WAY

When we decided to take on the adaptation of the original Warp plays and add to the saga after completion, we rapidly recognized the need for a little "pre-quel" action as well. In the adaptation, we tell the story of David Carson – you **know** who he is and where he comes from. As the story unfolds, you learn a bit about Lugulbanda's past, and you get a basic understanding of the relationship between Cumulus and Chaos. But we have recognized the need to fill in a few blanks before moving forward with the Warp universe.

Instead of interrupting the Warp saga, we decided to do a couple of **Warp Specials**, the first of which is to be released next month, coming between the fourth and fifth issues of **Warp**. And we figured the origin of Chaos – Prince of Madness was the way to go.

Plotting the story was a gas. **Warp** scripter **Peter Gillis** and writer **John Ostrander** (whose first published comics work, the Sargon story in **Warp** #1, has generated a great deal of favorable mail) – himself an eleven year fan of the Warp plays – joined Associate Editor Rick Oliver and yours truly in my office for an extremely silly four hour editorial conference.

At the end of the meeting, there were four near-lifeless bodies thrown about, on the floor, slumped in chairs, bent under desks. There also was a hell of a plot . . . And a real weird origin story.

Looking for an artist for this story presented no small problem. Frank Brunner was tied up on the regular **Warp** comic book, and we thought we needed a different artist to give the book a feeling of "over-there" ness: it isn't **Warp**, it comes before **Warp**. Peter suggested **Gene Day**, a man whose work all of us in the room and at First Comics respected a great deal. We called Gene, he was intrigued by the story and quickly accepted the assignment. We were, to put it mildly, ecstatic.

Over the next month, Gene and I worked quite closely, going over reference material from the original plays and from Frank's work on **Warp**, going over Peter's polished plot, discussing the finer points of the script. It was a fine creative experience; Gene had a personal vision that would add greatly to the Warp universe.

Shortly before Gene was to start actually pencilling the story – he was finishing up an Indiana Jones job for Marvel – Gene died.

Of course, we were shocked, particularly fellow Canadian **George Freeman**, of Captain Canuck fame, who was looking forward to the opportunity to ink his friend's work.

Howard Chaykin, who was busy preparing the plot for the first several issues of his upcoming **American Flagg** monthly for First, stepped in and did a fantastic job: Howie's a real pro. He had long been a fan of the Warp plays, and he did his own unique interpretation of the material. Howard's work speaks for itself; you'll get your chance to see it next month.

But we're all still in a state of shock regarding the passing of Gene Day. More than merely wondering "what would have been" had Gene been allowed the opportunity to finish the work he started: Gene's death left behind a number of friends, old and new, and a hell of a lot of fans.

We never realized the first **Warp Special** would wind up being so . . . special.

BEATING A PATH TO YOUR DOOR . . .

The First Comics caravan travels on and on and on. Publisher Rich Obadiah and I joined Howard Chaykin and his wife Leslie Zahler at the Boston Newcon last week (as we reckon time – last November to you, buddy); our first major convention after the release of **Warp** #1. We'd been hearing great sales reports from sundry dealers, but hearing your comments in person was an experience we weren't totally prepared for. We thank you deeply.

We also thank convention promoters Don Phelps and Marty (Thunderbunny) Greim for putting on one of the finer conventions we've been to in years.

Upcoming appearances: **Mike Grell** will bring **John Sable, Freelance** to Texas and to Minnesota during the upcoming weeks: he'll be at Bob Wayne's Fantastic Worlds bookstore in the middle of the month, and he'll be at the Minneapolis comic book convention March 26-27. Having the actual date of Mike's Fantastic Worlds appearance would make life easier for all of us, but all we can do is suggest people call 817-731-6222 for more information.

Joe (E-Man) Staton and **Bruce (Warp) Patterson** will be at the March 6th Chicago Minicon at the Americana-Congress Hotel. Call 312-743-4493 for more information.

COUNTING NOSES

Warmest wishes to Dick Tracy/Mike Mist/Ms. Tree writer Max Collins and his wife Barbara on the birth of their first son – the little bugger was released the very same day **Warp** #1 first went on sale!

NEXT MONTH

Peter Gillis, Howard Chaykin and George Freeman present **Warp Special** #1: **CHAOS, Prince of Madness; Mike Barr** guest-writes **E-Man** #4, which includes a Michael Mauser solo story; and Mike Grell offers up a grisly tale of Skid Row death in **Jon Sable, Freelance** #2. See you then!

Mike Gold

ALSO FIRST IN FEBRUARY:

JON SABLE, FREELANCE #1: "The Iron Monster," premiering Mike Grell's latest creation. Bounty hunter, bodyguard, mercenary . . . Jon Sable takes on the assignment of protecting the most valuable man in America. Written, pencilled and inked by Mike Grell, you can meet **Jon Sable, Freelance** on this very same comic rack, right now!

E-MAN #3: "Dark Albatross Must Be Rendered Inoperative, Lifewise!" the exciting conclusion of the Unhappy F-Men saga, by Martin Pasko and Joe Staton. Plus: Lee Marrs' **Pudge, Girl Blimp** returns to stop a daring one-page bank robbery!

Rick Obadiah, Publisher

Mike Gold, Managing Editor
Joe Staton, Art Director
Rick Oliver, Associate Editor
Bruce Patterson, Production Coordinator

Richard Felber, Business Manager
Kathy Kotsivas, Office Manager

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The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this publication are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, without satiric content are intended or should be inferred. Warp, Sargon – Mistress of War, Lord Cumulus, Chaos – Prince of Madness, Lugulbanda, Velaria, Symax, The Faceless Ones, Xander the Unconquerable and all prominent characters featured in this issue, and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of First Comics, Inc.

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A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

SQUID EDITION

FRANK BRUNNER . PETER GILLIS . BRUCE PATTERSON . KEN BRUZENAK . JANICE COHEN . MIKE GOLD
ADAPTATION/PENCILS SCRIPT INKS LETTERS COLORS EDITOR

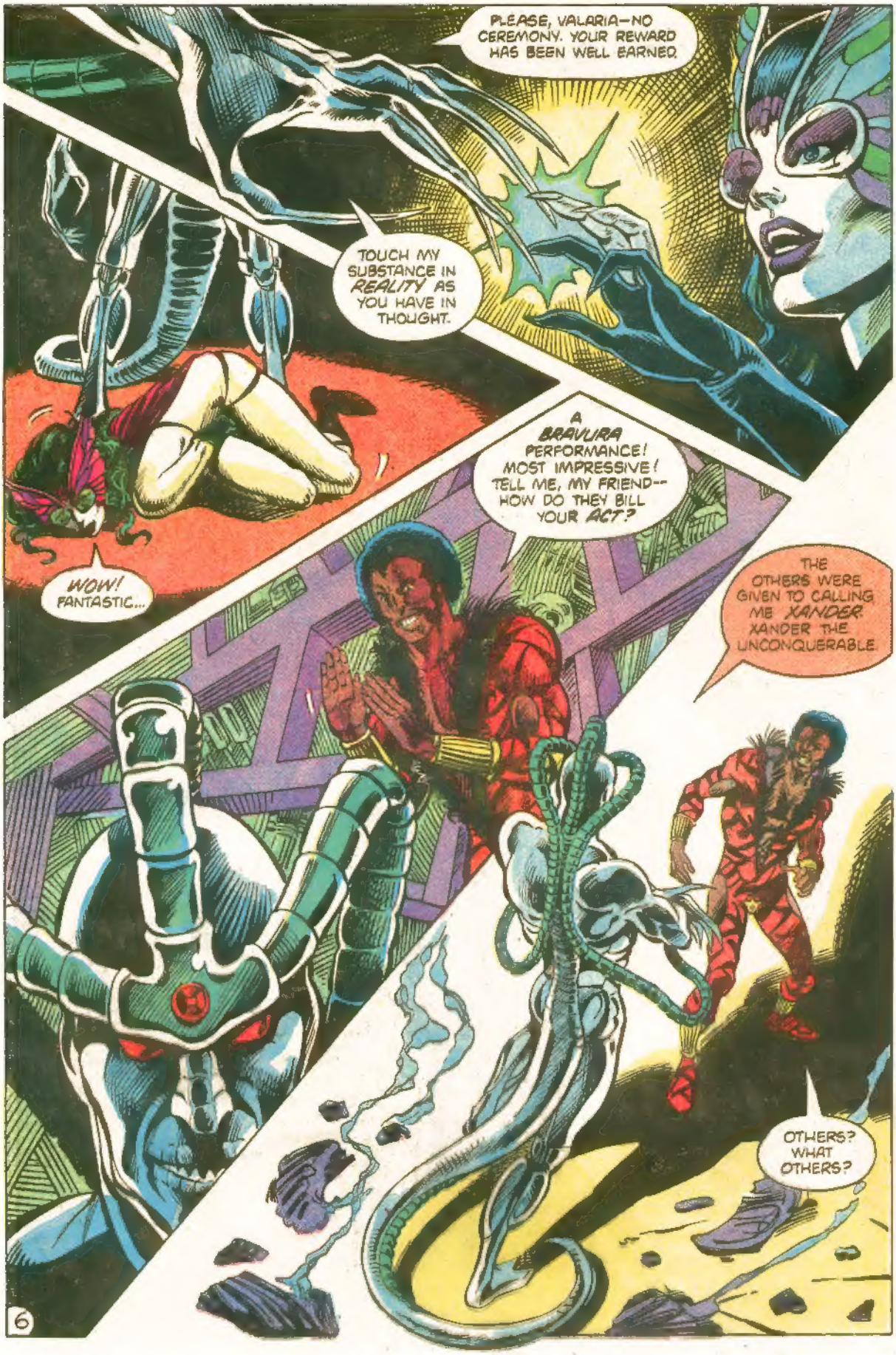
BASED ON THE PLAYS BY STUART GORDON AND BURY St. EDMUND

--THOUGH THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU JUST CAN'T TEACH A BUG.
AHH, SYMAX--
--YOU MAY TEACH ME WHATEVER YOU LIKE!
HYIIIIIIIIIIII!!! MASTER! THEBITCHBURNEDME! MYHANDISONFIRE!! DOSOMETHINGMASTER!
THAT'S A NEW ONE, MY DEAR-- I'M IMPRESSED.
WHAT ELSE DO YOU HAVE TO SHOW ME?
AWESOME THINGS, MY ONE-TIME PRINCE! THINGS YOU WON'T LIKE! PREPARE TO MEET YOUR MASTER!

THERE'S ONLY ONE MASTER IN FORTRESS ROTTWANG, AND HE'S HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR DELUSIONS. IN A MOMENT--
ARRRGH! WHAT'S THIS?
DAMN YOU! YOU'RE CHOKING ME--!
YOU ALWAYS RELIED TOO MUCH ON YOUR MACHINES, CHAOS!
OH, REALLY? I'D MEANT TO DO --THIS!
KWHAM!
YOU'RE ONLY MAKING THIS HARDER ON YOURSELF, SORCERESS!

YOU IMPOTENT SWINE! I TOLD YOU I WOULD HAVE MY VENGEANCE!
ON YOUR KNEES, SLAVE!
MASTER-- HOW'D SHE GET SUCH POWER?
HER POWERS ALWAYS WERE SEXUAL IN NATURE.
ERGO, SHE'S BEEN WITH SOMEONE-- OR SOME THING. NOW SHUT UP.
BEHOLD! HE THROBS-- HE PULSATES! HE IS ABOUT TO...
ON YOUR KNEES, ALL, AND PRAY FOR YOUR SOULS-- TO THE MASTER!
MASTER-- IT LOOKS DANGEROUS--
EVERYTHING DOES TO YOU, APE!
BUT SOMETHING IS HAPPENING--

OH, MIGHTY ONE FROM THE OTHER SIDE--
BE WELCOME TO YOUR NEW DOMAIN!

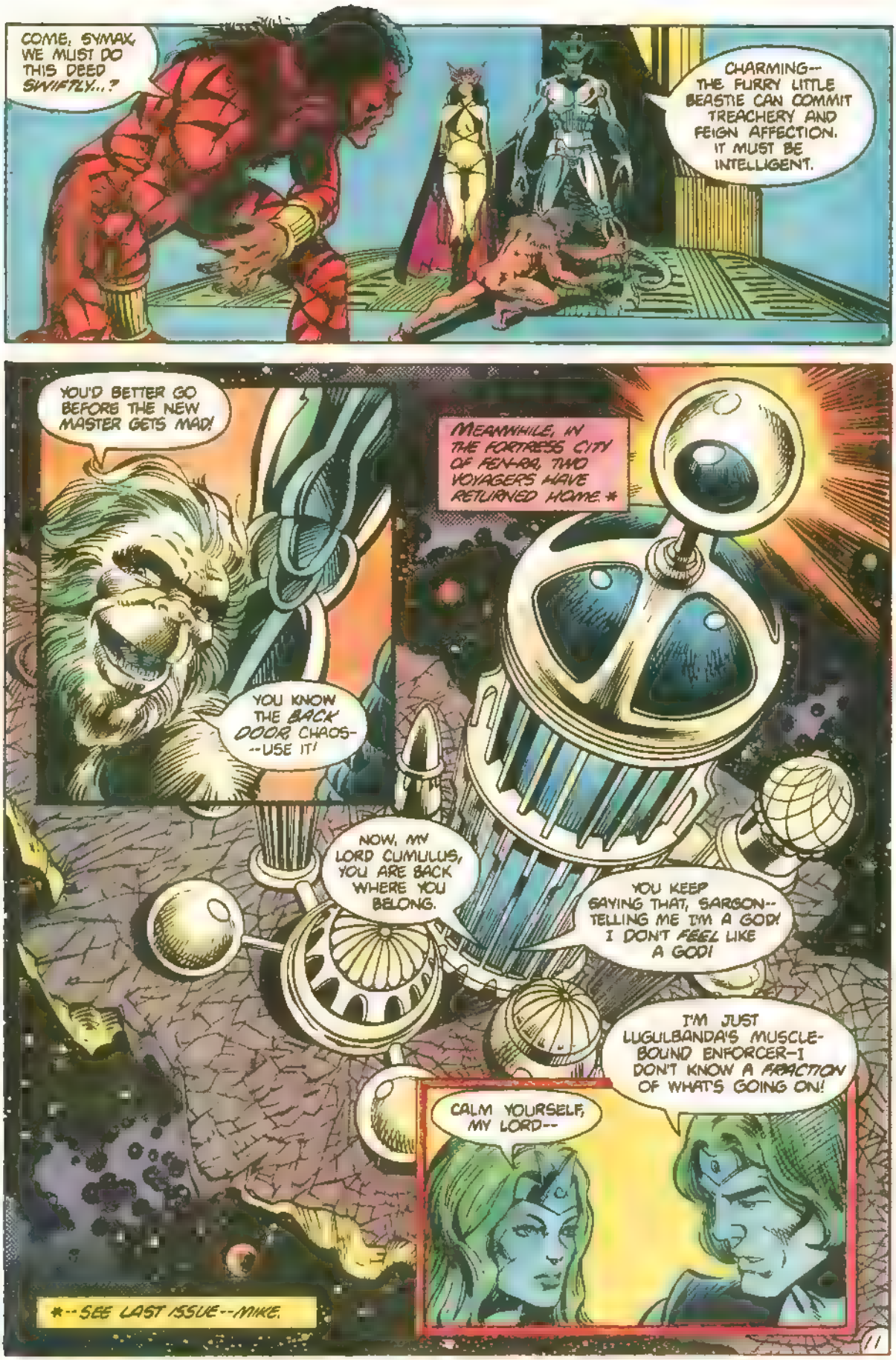

PLEASE, VALARIA—NO CEREMONY. YOUR REWARD HAS BEEN WELL EARNED.
TOUCH MY SUBSTANCE IN *REALITY* AS YOU HAVE IN THOUGHT.
WOW! FANTASTIC...
A *BRAVURA* PERFORMANCE! MOST IMPRESSIVE! TELL ME, MY FRIEND-- HOW DO THEY BILL YOUR *ACT?*
THE OTHERS WERE GIVEN TO CALLING ME *XANDER*. XANDER THE UNCONQUERABLE.
OTHERS? WHAT OTHERS?

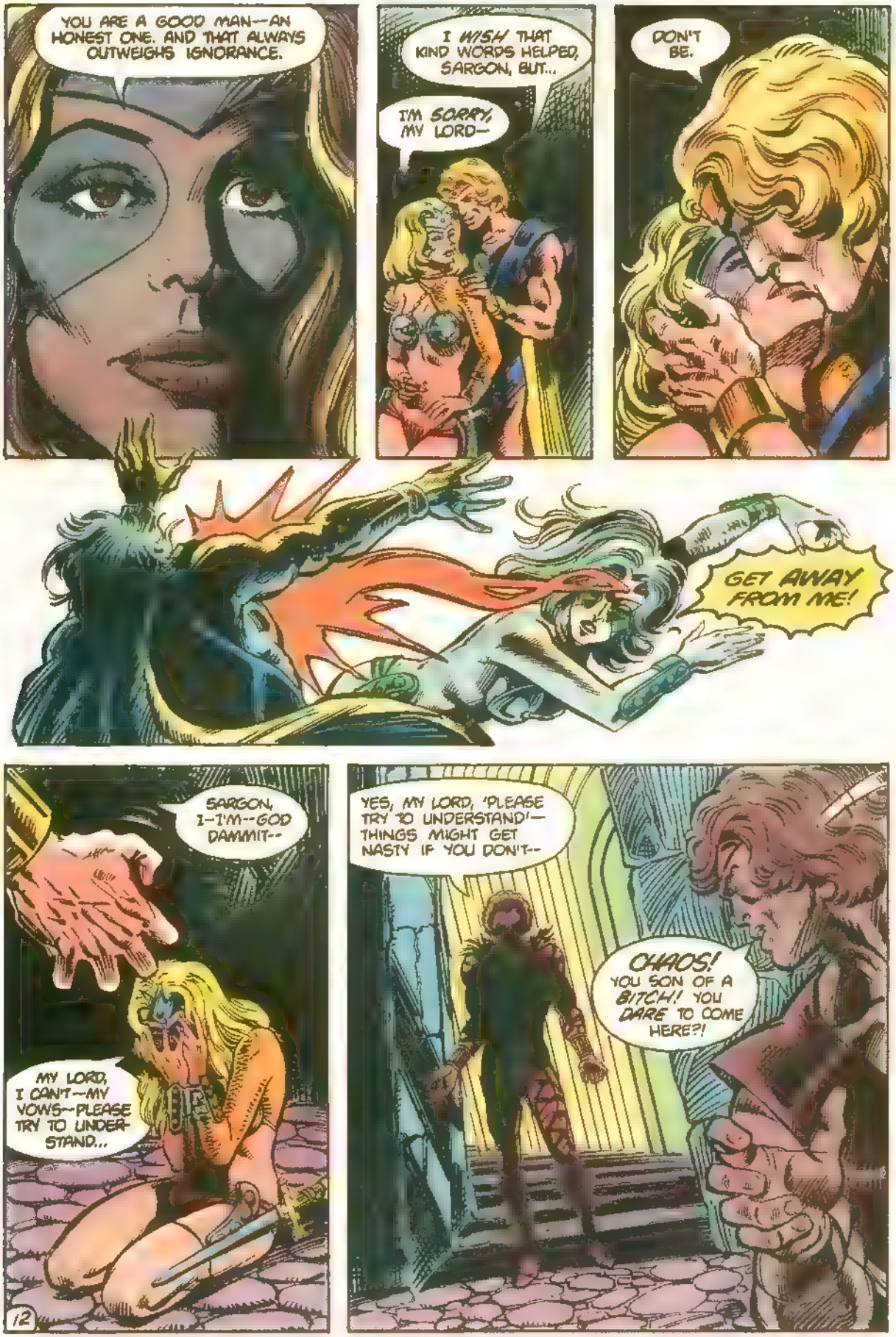
IS THE SUPREME INTELLECT STUMPED, THEN?
THE "OTHERS" ARE THE INHABITANTS OF THE SIXTH LEVEL!
AHHH-- THE LATE INHABITANTS OF THE SIXTH LEVEL.
I AM A SIMPLE CREATURE, REALLY, POSSESSED OF NOTHING SPECIAL--
SAVE A WELL-DEVELOPED PREDATORY IMPULSE AND SOME ANIMAL WILES.
"AT FIRST I WAS JUST AN ATOM, ALBEIT ONE WHICH IONIZED AND ABSORBED LESSER ATOMS--"
"--AND WHEN I EVOLVED TO THE CELLULAR STAGE, I PREYED ON ALL LIFE AROUND ME--SUCCESSFULLY, I MIGHT ADD--"
"--AND CONTINUED TO DEVOUR AND PLUNDER MY WAY UP THE PATHWAYS OF EVOLUTION."

QUITE EARLY ON, I DEVELOPED CONSCIOUSNESS --AND I SYSTEMATICALLY DESTROYED ALL LIFE-FORMS ON MY PLANET SAVE MY OWN--AND THEN THEM AS WELL.
"I JOURNEYED TO OTHER WORLDS, ROVED WITH THEM--KILLED THEIR DENIZENS ONE BY ONE, THEN RACE BY RACE--"
"--THEN PLANET BY PLANET. WHOLE GALAXIES FELL AT MY HANDS, UNTIL I HAD SLAUGHTERED ALL LIFE IN MY UNIVERSE."
"XANDER WAS ALONE, THEN--BUT STILL DRIVEN. MY MENTAL TENTACLES REACHED OUT ACROSS THE DIMENSIONAL BARRIERS FOR YET MORE PREY--"

"I ENCOUNTERED THE MIND OF VALERIA, AND THERE I INTRODUCED THE ESSENCE OF MY BEING. SHE THEN RECREATED THE BODY OF XANDER!"
SO PLEASE EXCUSE THE INTRUSION, AND ACCEPT THIS APOLOGY. SHALL WE MAKE RITUAL SALUTATION?
UM--WELL--
OK. SURE.
PARDON THE TALONS.
THE CRYSTAL, PRINCE CHAOS! THE CRYSTAL!
THE CRYSTAL? C-COULDN'T YOU HAVE JUST ASKED?
YOU CAN WRITHE IN AGONY, PREY, AS YOUR VISCERA ARE CRUSHED--
AND YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT--
WHEW NOTHING HAPPENED.
NOW, WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

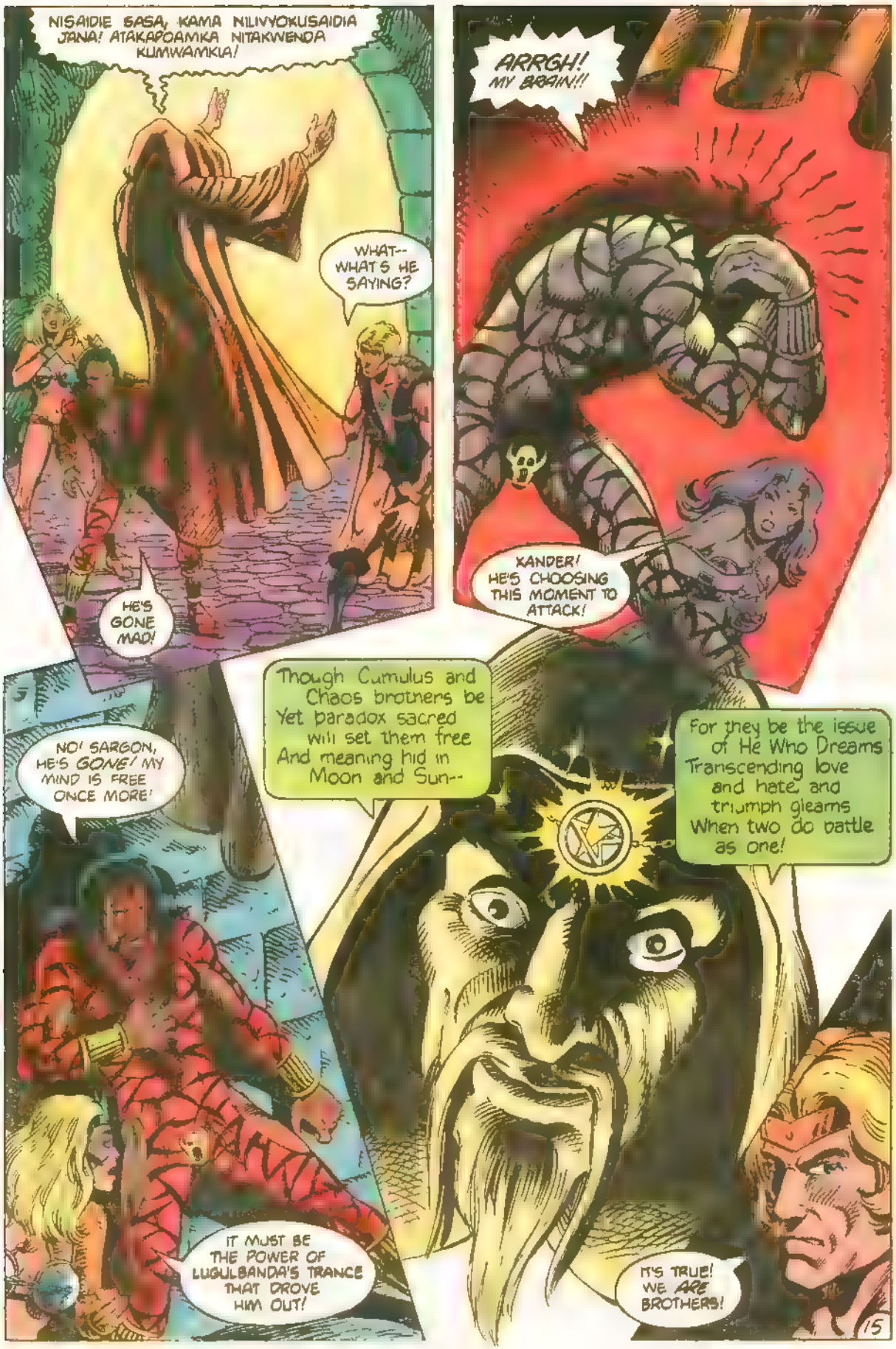
I AM ASKING YOU: WHERE IS IT?
I--IN THE EXACT CENTER OF THE GREAT HALL OF THE FORTRESS OF FEN-RA, CLOAKED AND PROTECTED BY A MULTIDIMENSIONAL WARP
SO THE LEGENDS ARE TRUE. I WILL REACH THE HIGHER DIMENSIONS! SO TOO, THEN MUST THE AMULET EXIST!
AMULET?
THE AMULET OF THREEFOLD WISDOM, THE FIRST OF WHOSE POWERS IS TO NEUTRALIZE THE WARP.
IS THIS AMULET THE SIZE OF A BABY'S HEART, A PERFECT CIRCLE WHOSE CENTER IS THE COLOR OF HYPNOTISM?
A FAIR DESCRIPTION THEN YOU'VE SEEN IT?
YES--ON THE BREAST OF LORD CUMULUS! CONSIDERING HIS IMMENSE POWER, LUGULBANDA MOST LIKELY CONSIDERED THAT THE SAFEST PLACE POSSIBLE.
SINCE YOU KNOW THIS LORD CUMULUS, FETCH HIM TO ME!
I CAN'T JUST FETCH--
THINK AGAIN PREY!
ARRGH! OK, OK!
TO THE GREAT VOID YOU SHALL BRING HIM!
NOW-- FETCH!
10


COME, SYMAX, WE MUST DO THIS DEED SWIFTLY...?
CHARMING-- THE FURRY LITTLE BEASTIE CAN COMMIT TREACHERY AND FEIGN AFFECTION. IT MUST BE INTELLIGENT.
YOU'D BETTER GO BEFORE THE NEW MASTER GETS MAD!
YOU KNOW THE BACK DOOR, CHAOS-- --USE IT!
MEANWHILE, IN THE FORTRESS CITY OF FEN-RA, TWO VOYAGERS HAVE RETURNED HOME.*
NOW, MY LORD CUMULUS, YOU ARE BACK WHERE YOU BELONG.
YOU KEEP SAYING THAT, SARGON-- TELLING ME I'M A GOD! I DON'T FEEL LIKE A GOD!
I'M JUST LUGULBANDA'S MUSCLE-BOUND ENFORCER-I DON'T KNOW A FRACTION OF WHAT'S GOING ON!
CALM YOURSELF, MY LORD--
*--SEE LAST ISSUE--MIKE.
11

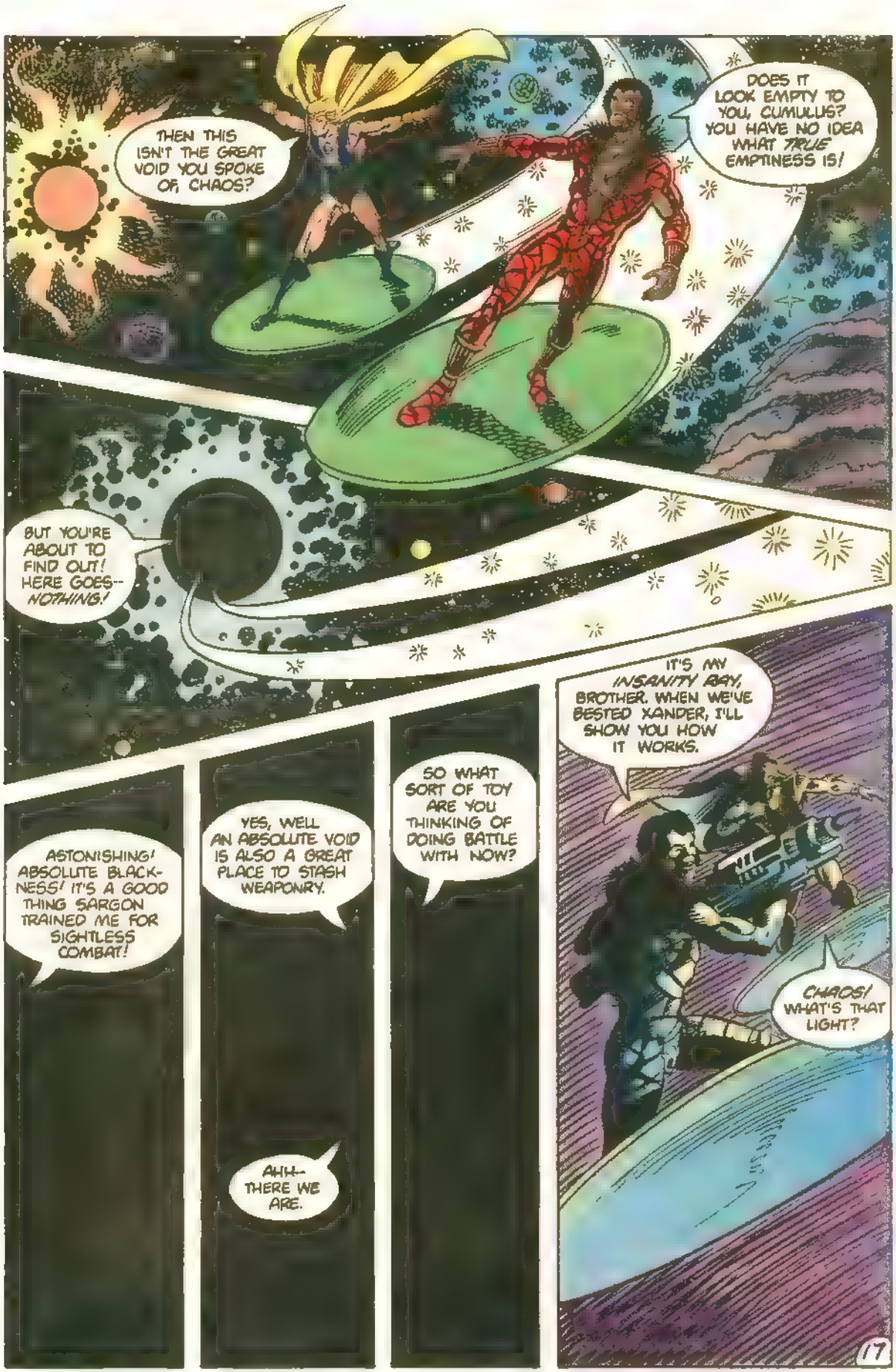

YOU ARE A GOOD MAN--AN HONEST ONE. AND THAT ALWAYS OUTWEIGHS IGNORANCE.
I WISH THAT KIND WORDS HELPED, SARGON, BUT...
I'M SORRY, MY LORD--
DON'T BE.
GET AWAY FROM ME!
SARGON, I--I'M--GOD DAMMIT--
MY LORD, I CAN'T--MY VOWS--PLEASE TRY TO UNDERSTAND...
YES, MY LORD, 'PLEASE TRY TO UNDERSTAND'--THINGS MIGHT GET NASTY IF YOU DON'T--
CHAOS! YOU SON OF A BITCH! YOU DARE TO COME HERE?!
12

WAIT, MY LORD— DON'T--!
YOU BASTARD! YOU BETRAYED ME—YOU KILLED MY EARTH-BODY!*
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT HERE, BUT—
* BEAM, LAST ISSUE—MIKE.
CONSENT? CAN HE BE THAT INSANE?
THE LADY SPEAKS SOOTH, MY LORD. FACE FACTS.
AH, PRINCE CHAOS, GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK! NOW THAT YOU HAVE COME IN PEACE, YOU ARE MOST WELCOME!
MY LORD, IF HE IS HERE, IT COULD ONLY BE WITH LUGULBANDA'S CONSENT!
I DO HAVE YOUR NAME RIGHT, DON'T I?
I DON'T COME IN PEACE, BUT IN DEFEAT--AT THE COMMAND OF ONE WHOSE RUTHLESSNESS ALMOST EQUALS MINE!
ARRRGH! ALL RIGHT, IT EXCEEDS MINE!
I STAND CORRECTED, LORD XANDER!
13

PLEASE DESCRIBE THIS XANDER
DEATH INCARNATE. AN ASCETIC. HE KILLS AND THAT IS ALL HE DOES.
AND WHAT'S HE AFTER?
YOU, I SUSPECT, MY LORD.
REMARKABLY CLOSE. HE WANTS THE CRYSTAL! AND HE'S CONVINCED THE KEY TO IT IS THE AMULET ON CLIMULUS' CHEST!
SO THE MOMENT OF MOMENTS HAS FINALLY ARRIVED!
MOMENT? WHAT MOMENT?
THE MOMENT FOR HE WHO IS KNOWLEDGE TO ENTER THE TRANCE OF TEN THOUSAND TRUTHS!
I UNFOLD THE INTERTWINING FATES--I PENETRATE THE MOTHER STAR--I GAZE ON THE FORBIDDEN FANTASIES OF HE WHO DREAMS!


NISAIDIE SASA, KAMA NILIVYOKUSAIDIA JANA! ATAKAPOAMKA NITAKWENDA KUMWAMKIA!
WHAT-- WHAT'S HE SAYING?
HE'S GONE MAD!
ARRGH! MY BRAIN!!!
KANDER! HE'S CHOOSING THIS MOMENT TO ATTACK!
NO! SARGON, HE'S GONE! MY MIND IS FREE ONCE MORE!
IT MUST BE THE POWER OF LUGULBANDA'S TRANCE THAT DROVE HIM OUT!
Though Cumulus and Chaos brotners be Yet paradox sacred will set them free And meaning hid in Moon and Sun--
For they be the issue of He Who Dreams Transcending love and hate and triumph gleams When two do battle as one!
IT'S TRUE! WE ARE BROTHERS!
15

IT'S TRUE! THEY ARE THE SONS OF HE WHO DREAMS!
IT'S TRUE! I AM THE HEIR APPARENT OF GOD!
WHAT LUGULBANDA MUST MEAN IS THAT, POWERFUL AS XANDER IS, HE CAN BE DEFEATED BY THE TWO SONS OF HE WHO DREAMS-- IF UNITED!
THERE IS NO WAY I COULD SUFFER BEING UNITED WITH THAT!
I COULD NEVER ALLY MYSELF WITH THAT TREACHEROUS FOP.
NOW LISTEN UP! YOU'VE GOT YOUR ORDERS --FROM KNOWLEDGE INCARNATE!
YOU MAY NOT UNDERSTAND THE WORDS, BUT YOU CAN DANCE TO THE TUNE!
I'LL LEAD YOU, IF NEED BE!
NO, SARGON- CHAOS WILL LEAD ME TO XANDER, THOUGH I WILL NOT FIGHT ALONGSIDE HIM.
YOU MUST STAY AND GUARD LUGULBANDA.


THEN THIS ISN'T THE GREAT VOID YOU SPOKE OF, CHAOS?
DOES IT LOOK EMPTY TO YOU, CUMULUS? YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT *TRUE* EMPTINESS IS!
BUT YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT! HERE GOES-- *NOTHING!*
ASTONISHING! ABSOLUTE BLACKNESS! IT'S A GOOD THING SARGON TRAINED ME FOR SIGHTLESS COMBAT!
YES, WELL AN ABSOLUTE VOID IS ALSO A GREAT PLACE TO STASH WEAPONRY.
AHH-- THERE WE ARE.
SO WHAT SORT OF TOY ARE YOU THINKING OF DOING BATTLE WITH NOW?
IT'S MY *INSANITY RAY*, BROTHER. WHEN WE'VE BESTED XANDER, I'LL SHOW YOU HOW IT WORKS.
CHAOS! WHAT'S THAT LIGHT?

IT IS XANDER! THE ATTACK HAS BEGUN!
NEXT ISSUE
UNITED WE STAND DIVIDED WE DIE!

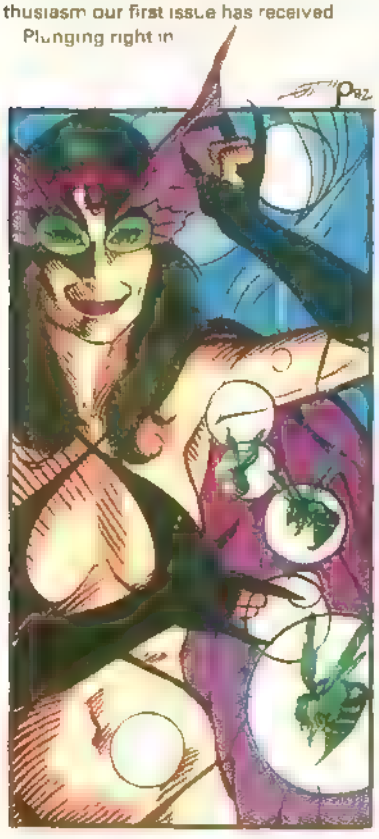
warped words

%FIRST COMICS, 1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

When putting together letter columns, an editor can run into one of two problems: not having enough worthwhile material on hand to fill out a column, or having too much. The latter problem is better than the former – it should be easier to cut than to fake.

It should be. I've got so much worthwhile mail on my desk right now I can't find my telephone. We're literally floored by the vast quantity of mail received on **Warp** #1 thus far (it's been out on the stands for a mere two weeks now) – and we all appreciate the high degree of enthusiasm our first issue has received.

Plunging right in:



Dear First:

I'd didn't have anything better to do, so I went to New York's famous Grand Central Terminal to find out what commuters on the 8:52 from Amawalk thought of Warp #1. Here are but a few of the comments I received:

"I don't read comics, kid!"

"I only read X-Men, not this overpriced direct sales garbage!"

"What's Warp? A comic book? Comics are for kids, now stop buggin' me before I call a cop."

"I never heard of Warp. I can't tell you how I spell relief, if you want."

"It's the greatest. I love it! I spend all my money on Warp every day! Am I gonna be on TV?"

Well, I liked it. Everything looks good, and the text pages and the house ad do not look like they were thrown together in three seconds. Except, perhaps, for a few of the o's in "First Notes." Or did you leave some of them out on purpose? Come to think of it, that's not a bad idea if you plan to reprint Warp #1 in the future. That way, a collector can tell if he has the first printing, which lacks six o's and is worth $100.00, or a later printing, which has the six missing o's and sells for cover price.

Gary Dunaier
67-18 Parsons Blvd
Flushing, N.Y.

Gary, there was a little-known city ordinance in effect here in Evanston at the time, limiting the number of o's a professional typesetter could use during any twenty-four hour period. Unfortunately, "First Notes" was set towards the end of the day, right before the daily police raid. So our typesetter had to edit out a half-dozen o's. He sold them to a cereal manufacturer, and split the take with us.

Dear Mike,

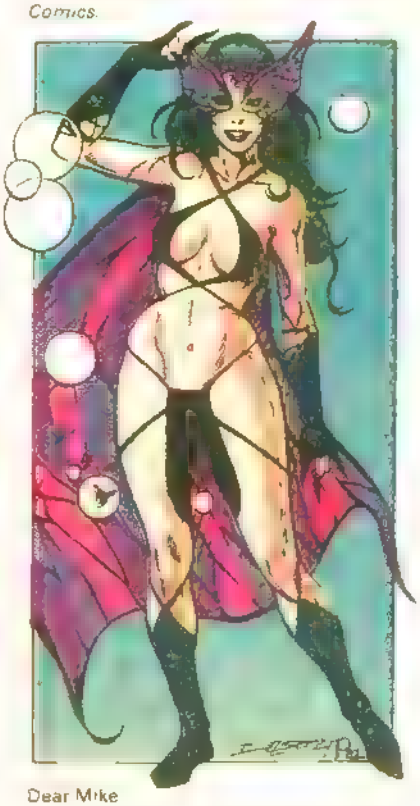
Ten years ago I attended a Sunday afternoon matinee preview of Warp I in New York. I knew the play was tapping into something widespread when Lord Cumulus made his first appearance to the accompaniment of the rapid breath intake of my escort (the actor was quite a hunk and the Cookie Gluck/Neal Adams designed outfit quite daring)... and shortly after, we were shown the superior prowess of Sargon. Oh, the play had all the rock-em, sock-em and the jumping-up-and-down that has turned on generations of young and old boys (present company included), but it also had more: the simple insight of treating its female characters as on a par with the males – both good guys and bad guys. The men were as sexy as the women and the women were as powerful as the men. It was entertainment for everybody.

Well, Warp came and went in New York very quickly. But I didn't forget. After attending the Chicago Comicon performance in 1980, I arranged to bring all of the comic distributors who attended a Marvel Comics sales meeting I organized to a Warp performance – partially to let them know that we comics folks weren't alone, there were others out there who read what we did and gave it back to us enriched with their own ideas.

This is a very convoluted way of saying that I'm in love with Warp, that I've pushed it before to succeed and that I'm rooting for it now to triumph in the comics. Brunner/Gillis/Smith did a fine job with the first issue and I'm looking forward to many future issues.

Mike Friedrich
Star*Reach Productions
P.O. Box 2328
Berkeley, California

*Mike, of course, is a long-time comics fan and pro – editor of Star*Reach and its sundry projects, comics scripter and now comics talent agent. His latest project is the Elric series being published by Pacific Comics.*



Dear Mike:

As a collector of comics, I consider myself as having impeccable taste. After reading the first issue of Warp, I am putting it on my "must buy" list!

Frank Brunner's art is among the best I have seen in a while. Of course Peter Gillis's script was not found lacking, either. The efforts of both seem to compliment one another so well it is unbelievable!

The back-up story was so delightful, it's a shame to call it a back-up story! The art of Delsol was good but the story – especially the characterization of Sargon by Ostrander really made the story work. I

hope to see more of Sargon (in so o features) in the near future!

Gentlemen, my hat is off to you for such a fine book!

Jim Weaver Jr.
1111 Linden Ct
Jefferson City, MO

Yeah, Jim, but did you like it?

For your information — and that of about three dozen others who inquired — our next Sargon solo feature will start in **Warp** *#5 and run three parts. Written by John Ostrander, pencilled by Lenin Delsol, and inked by Al Gordon. It'll be out in mid-April.*

Dear Rick,

Frank Brunner long has been building toward this level of excellence and he comes of age with Warp #1. Bob Smith's inking is superb. Sorry, I don't have anything to say against it! Having printer's ink in my blood, I must also compliment your printer for laying down some good ink. The average reader might not notice printing quality, but I do. This is good comic book material

Years ago, I took a group of fans and young artists to visit the studio of Jack Kirby. We sat around talking. Someone moaned about the price of comic books going up to 35¢, and I got mad. "They should be $1.00 each," I said, "look at all the skill that goes into a comic book. The artist and writer put so many hours into it! Look at what you get!" Jack agreed. So now we have a $1.00 price tag, as I predicted, and artists and writers are getting a better shake.

Here's wishing you success!

Shel Dorf
Box 7531
San Diego, CA

Shel, newsstand comics went up to 35¢ in late 1976, as I recall, and by today's standards, it would take two 1982 dollars to buy what you could have bought for one back then.

Mad Magazine publisher Bill Gaines uses the price of a hot dog as his inflation index: when 10¢ comics first came out, you could buy a hot dog and fries for 5¢. Today, a dog and fries cost at least $1.25, so comics should cost $2.50 a piece! Our comics, and Mad for that matter, are grossly underpriced by the hot dog index. Not to mention by the price of an ounce of gold.

Mr. Dorf, by the way, is the editor of Kitchen Sink's Steve Canyon Magazine, the letterer of the Steve Canyon comic strip, and one of the honchos of the legendary San Diego comic art convention. Thanks for the kind words, Shel!

S rs

I am pleased to see another company competing with the repetitive, stereotyped drivel being churned out elsewhere. Please try to avoid the formulaic traditions which dominate the industry. In particular:

"Give them their due. These guards are the best there are. Fifty of the toughest mercenaries in the cosmos.

"Pity them.

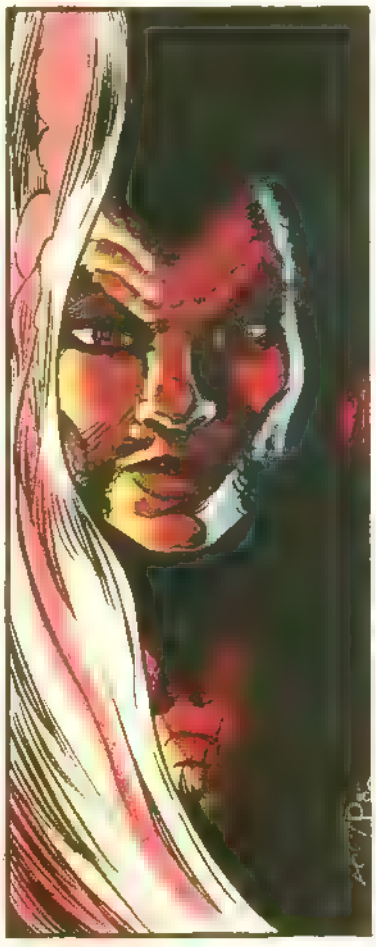
"Come, FOOLS! Come to me and DIE!"

Now really! I have seen this same page so many times in a dozen Red Sonjas, forty times in Ms. Marvel, Conan, and so on as nauseum.

Timothy L. Gunn
273 Maxo Court
Glen Burnie, MD

You make some valid points, Timothy, points that we are considering strongly. There are many comic art conventions — no pun intended — that are hard to avoid: some great comics writers are so stuck on these conventions that it seems these days they are turning out parodies of their own work. It's an easy trap to fall into — one that we'll make a greater effort to avoid.

Thanks for the criticism. We encourage readers to follow Timothy's lead — over 99% of our mail thus far was favorable, don't be afraid to give us the bad with the good.



Dear Mike,

Awesome!

I just finished reading Warp #1. I must say I am very impressed with your first issue. The cover blows my mind — it caught my eye as soon as I saw it. When I noticed there was no comics code seal, I was thrilled! I knew then this wouldn't be a wimpy comic, with sayings like "What the . . ." or "Holy Moly!"

All in all, a sensational, brilliant, exciting comic!!! Awesome!!

Jos Pasqua
19 Wantastiquet Drive
Brattleboro, Vermont

Far sherr!!

Dear Mike, et al

Congratulations on your premiere issue of Warp. It was more than a premium quality publication. The artwork was fabulous, as stunning as anything I've seen in comics. Kudos to Frank Brunner and Bob Smith. Moreover, the colorist, Janice Cohen, deserves a great deal of credit.

I didn't expect the back-up feature to maintain this kind of excellence, but Lenin Delsol and Joe Staton floored me. I agree that we'll be hearing a great deal from Mr Delsol. The scripting was excellent as well, thanks to Peter Gillis and John Ostrander (didn't want you guys to feel left out). But the art was so spectacular that it overshadowed every other aspect of the book.

Thank you for a marvelously entertaining new comic, and continued success for First Comics.

P.S. When are we going to get to see the play in the New York area?

David R. Guzman
420 Temple Street
New Haven, CT

If our mail is any indication, David, the **Warp** *comic book seems to be spurring considerable interest in the Warp plays — so I wouldn't be too surprised to see Warp returning to the New York area before too long. Productions in the midwest and the west coast are under negotiation right now.*

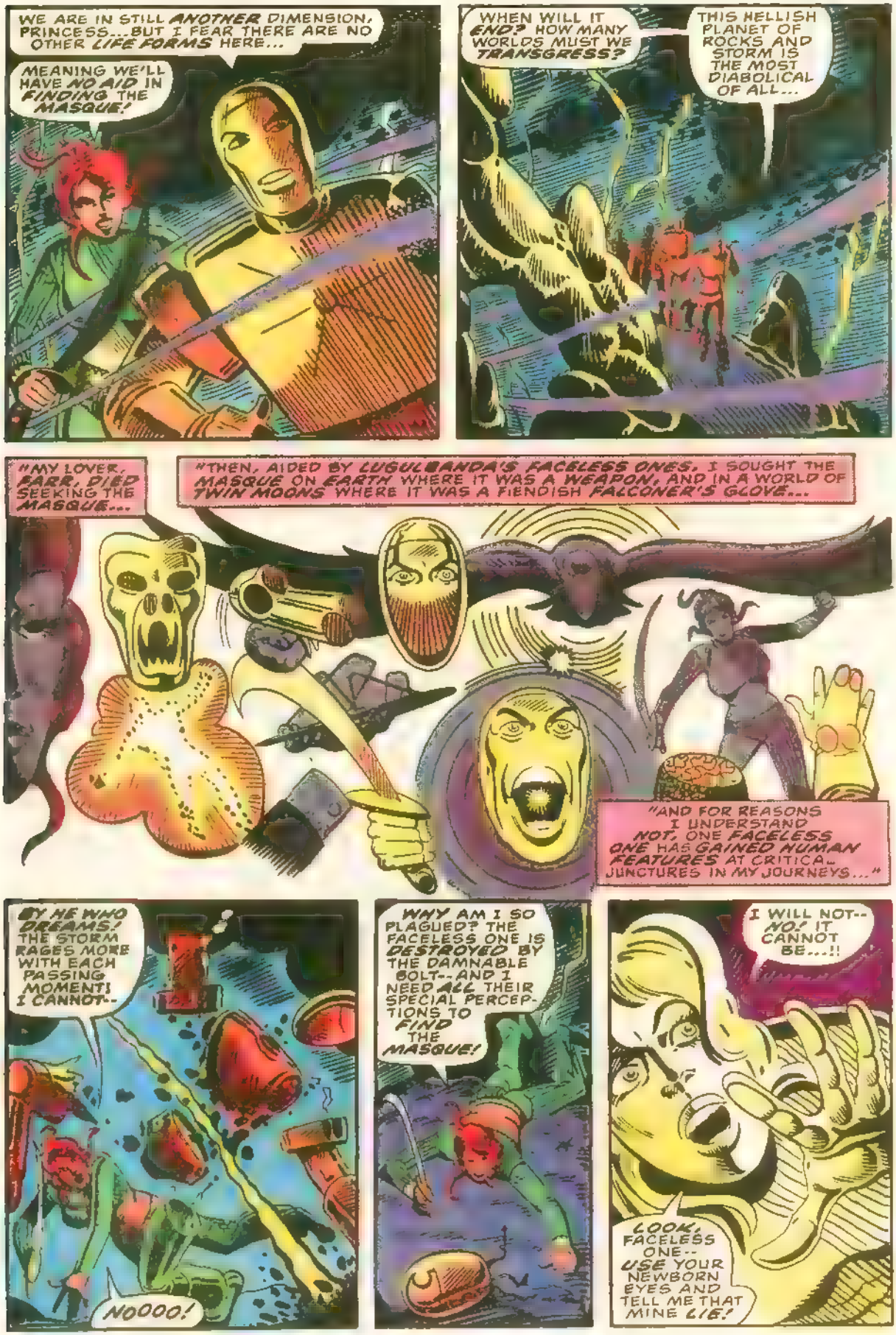
NEXT MONTH will see the release of our very first **Warp Special,** entitled **Chaos — Prince Of Madness:** The (Not-So) Secret Origin of Prince Chaos! A twenty-eight page mini-epic, set before the days of David Carson, wherein we learn the reason behind the sibling rivalry, and we meet, for the first time, Lord Cumulus (!?!). Written by **Peter Gillis,** pencilled by **Howard Chaykin,** and inked by **George Freeman, Warp Special** #1 will be on sale in mid-March.

AND IN APRIL: Warp #5 continues the adaptation of the Warp plays, as seen by Frank Brunner, Peter Gillis and Bruce Patterson this time around. Chaos, Cumulus, Sargon and Valaria have to escape both the clutches of Xander and Prince Chaos's very own traps! As if that isn't enough, we begin a three-part Sargon solo story by John Ostrander, Lenin Delsol and Al Gordon!

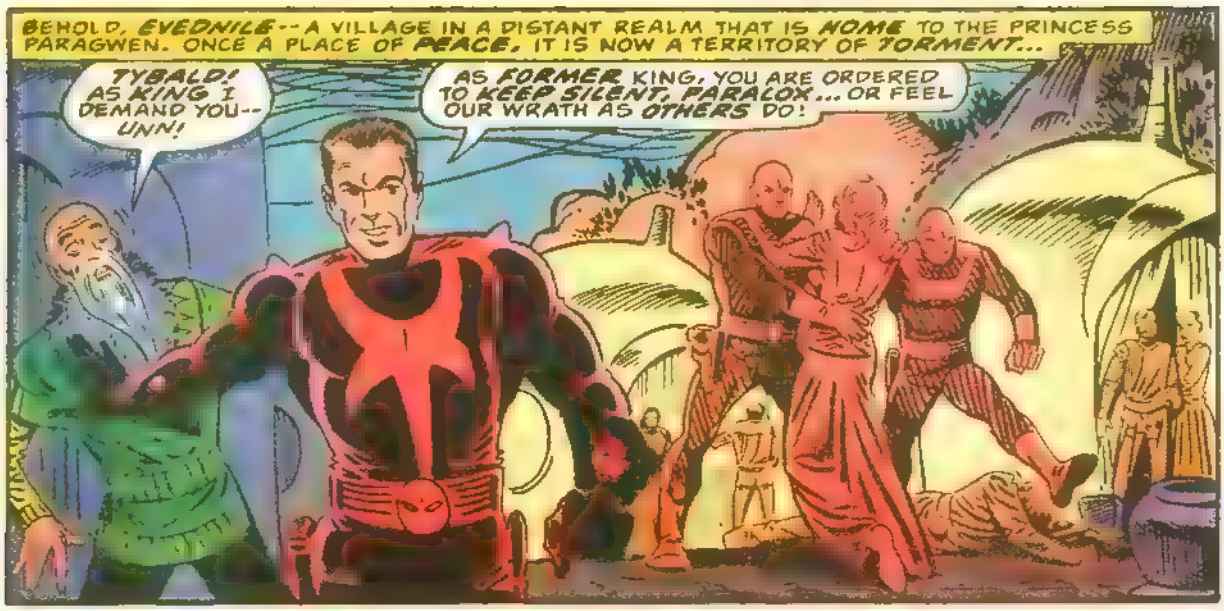
See you then!

– Mike Gold

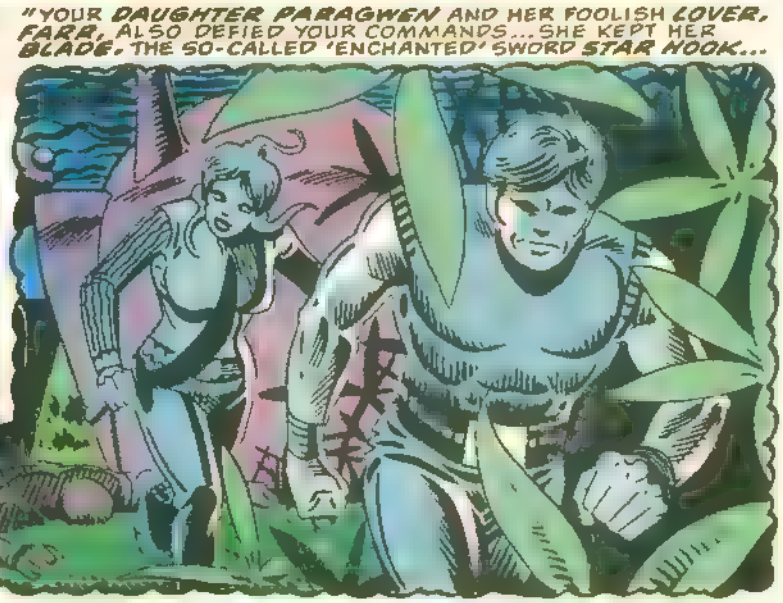
THE
FACELESS ONES
TM
FACES BEFORE The MASQUE
PART III of "THE PERILS of PARAGWEN"
THIS IS THE SWIRLING BLACKNESS-- A DOORWAY THROUGH THE LIMITLESS REALMS OF TIME AND SPACE...
THESE ARE THE FACELESS ONES, GOLDEN ROBOTS CREATED BY HE-WHO-IS-KNOWLEDGE, THE WIZARD LUGULBANDA...
AND THIS IS THE PRINCESS PARAGWEN WHO LEADS HER MECHANICAL COMPANIONS ON THE INTER-DIMENSIONAL QUEST FOR THE MYSTIC MASQUE OF MOTTAGAMMA--!
WE--WE'RE HERE! WHEREVER "HERE" IS...
JACK C. HARRIS WRITER
STEVE DITKO ARTIST
BILL SPICER LETTERER
JANICE COHEN COLORIST
MIKE GOLD EDITOR
BASED UPON CHARACTERS FROM THE PLAY WARP BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMUND!

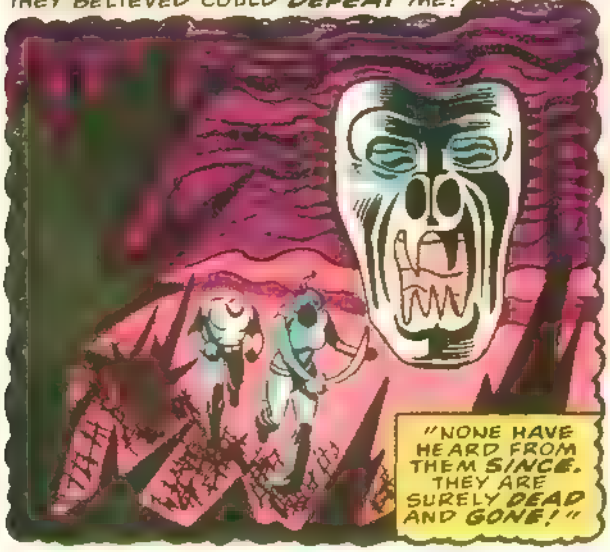

WE ARE IN STILL ANOTHER DIMENSION, PRINCESS...BUT I FEAR THERE ARE NO OTHER LIFE FORMS HERE...
MEANING WE'LL HAVE NO AID IN FINDING THE MASQUE!
WHEN WILL IT END? HOW MANY WORLDS MUST WE TRANSGRESS?
THIS HELLISH PLANET OF ROCKS AND STORM IS THE MOST DIABOLICAL OF ALL...
"MY LOVER, EARR, DIED SEEKING THE MASQUE...
"THEN, AIDED BY LUGUL BANDA'S FACELESS ONES, I SOUGHT THE MASQUE ON EARTH WHERE IT WAS A WEAPON, AND IN A WORLD OF TWIN MOONS WHERE IT WAS A FIENDISH FALCONER'S GLOVE...
"AND FOR REASONS I UNDERSTAND NOT, ONE FACELESS ONE HAS GAINED HUMAN FEATURES AT CRITICAL JUNCTURES IN MY JOURNEYS..."
BY HE WHO DREAMS! THE STORM RAGES MORE WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT! I CANNOT--
NOOOO!
WHY AM I SO PLAGUED? THE FACELESS ONE IS DESTROYED BY THE DAMNABLE BOLT--AND I NEED ALL THEIR SPECIAL PERCEPTIONS TO FIND THE MASQUE!
I WILL NOT-- NO! IT CANNOT BE...!!
LOOK, FACELESS ONE-- USE YOUR NEWBORN EYES AND TELL ME THAT MINE LIE!

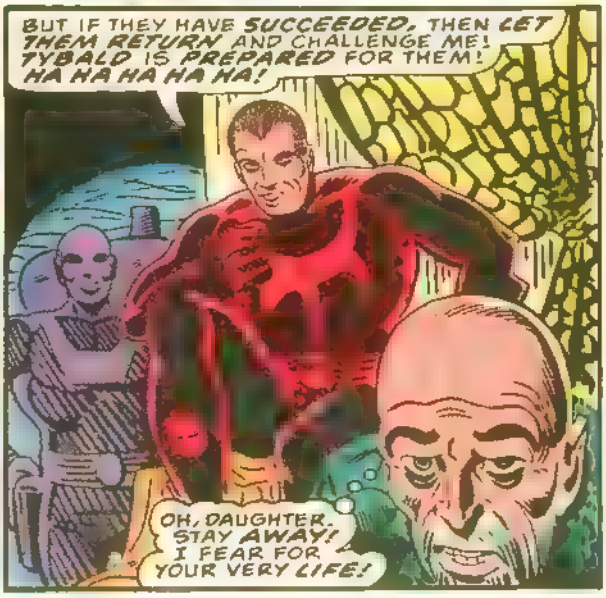
I SEE IT AS WELL, PRINCESS... IN THIS DIMENSION, THE MASQUE OF MOTTAGAMMA EXISTS AS... A MOUNTAIN!
FIRST A MASQUE, THEN A WEAPON, NEXT A GLOVE AND NOW... THIS!!
I COULD TRANSPORT IT IN THE OTHER CONFIGURATIONS... BUT HOW... HOW IN THE NAME OF HE-WHO-DREAMS CAN WE CARRY A MILLION TONS OF STONE AND ROCK?!
THE ANSWER IS... WE CANNOT... I CANNOT...
...I... HAVE... FAILED...
AND IN A FARAWAY NAMELESS DIMENSION A QUEST IS... PRINCESS SURRENDERS...


BEHOLD, EVEDNILE--A VILLAGE IN A DISTANT REALM THAT IS NOME TO THE PRINCESS PARAGWEN. ONCE A PLACE OF PEACE, IT IS NOW A TERRITORY OF TORMENT...
TYBALD! AS KING I DEMAND YOU-- UNN!
AS FORMER KING, YOU ARE ORDERED TO KEEP SILENT, PARALOX... OR FEEL OUR WRATH AS OTHERS DO!

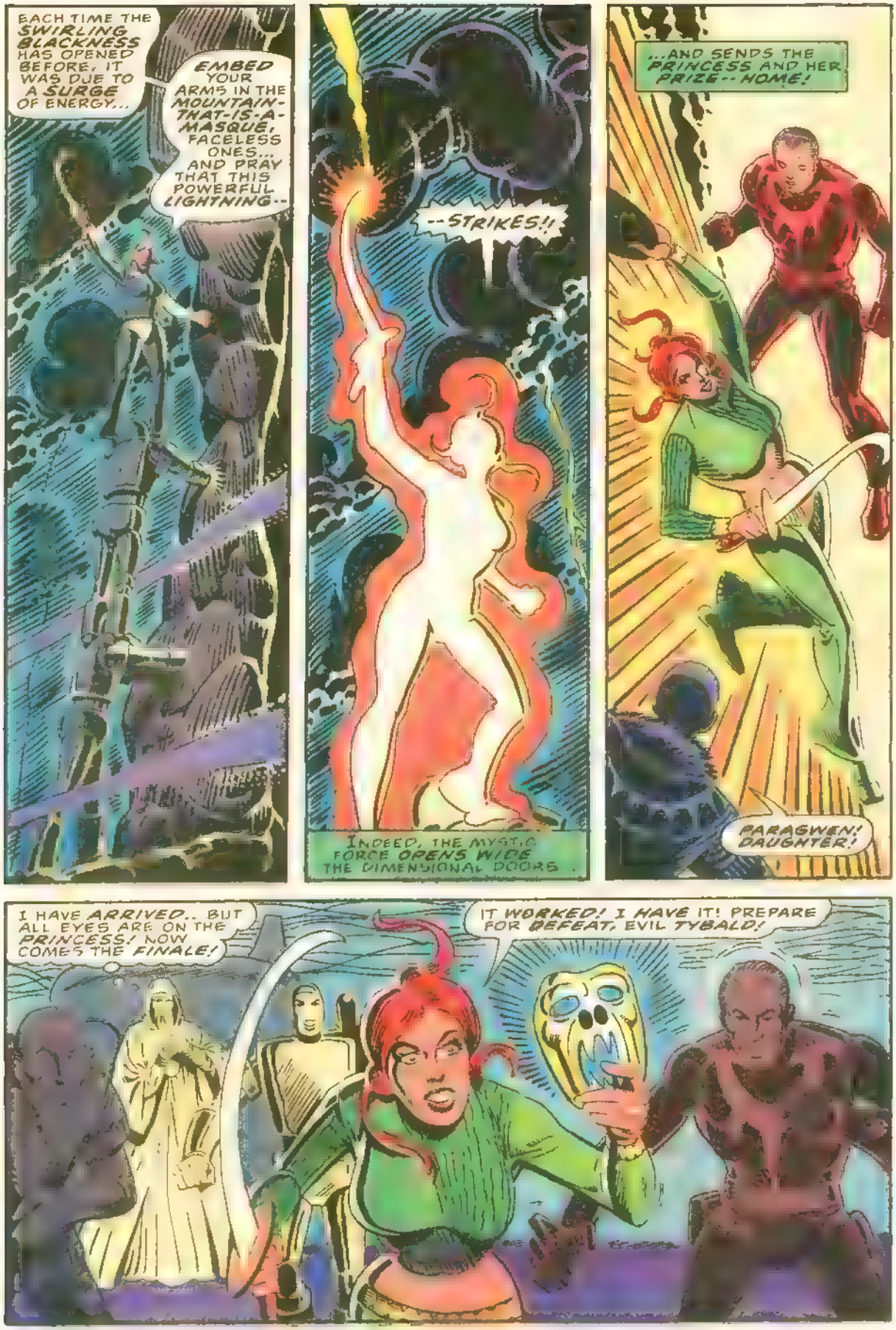
YOU PERSUADED YOUR PEOPLE TO GIVE UP THEIR WEAPONS OF WAR... AND WHEN THEY OBEYED, I SEIZED YOUR THRONE BECAUSE I ALONE RETAINED SOME OF OUR ONCE-UNCONQUERABLE POWER!
NO... THAT IS NOT COMPLETELY TRUE...


"YOUR DAUGHTER PARAGWEN AND HER FOOLISH LOVER, FARR, ALSO DEFIED YOUR COMMANDS... SHE KEPT HER BLADE, THE SO-CALLED 'ENCHANTED' SWORD STAR HOOK...

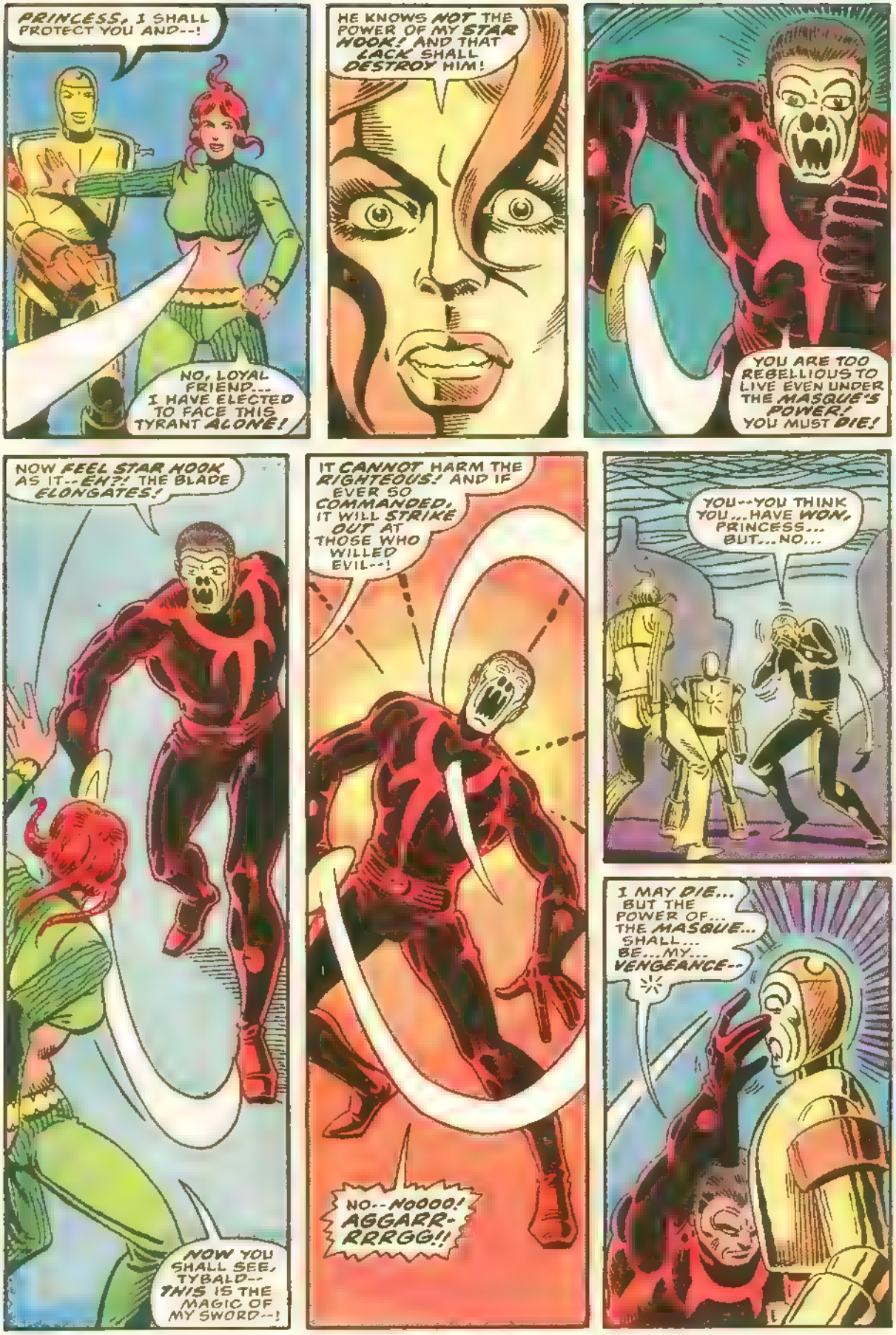

"...THEY FLED EVEDNILE IN SEARCH OF THE MASQUE OF MOTTAGAMMA WHOSE POWER THEY BELIEVED COULD DEFEAT ME!
"NONE HAVE HEARD FROM THEM SINCE. THEY ARE SURELY DEAD AND GONE!"


BUT IF THEY HAVE SUCCEEDED, THEN LET THEM RETURN AND CHALLENGE ME! TYBALD IS PREPARED FOR THEM! HA HA HA HA HA!
OH, DAUGHTER. STAY AWAY! I FEAR FOR YOUR VERY LIFE!

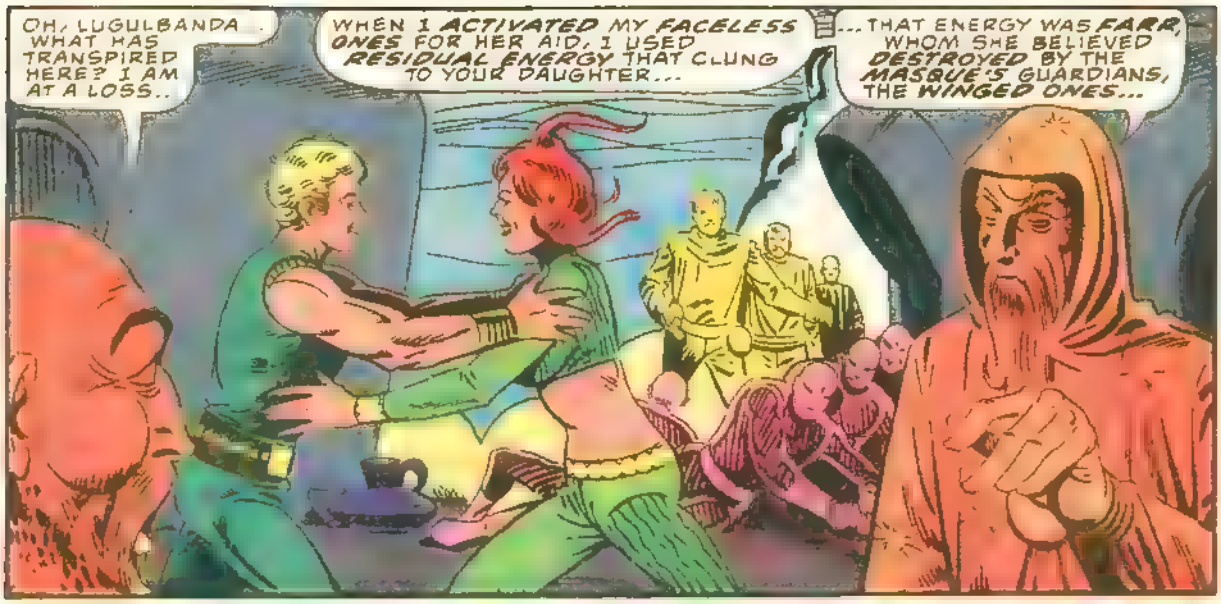
NOW JOIN THE WEAPONS ASSEMBLY-LINE, PARALOX--- YOU SHALL DO YOUR SHARE OF RE-BUILDING EVEDNILE'S MILITARY MIGHT!
AND DO NOT SEEK TO USE THESE NEW WEAPONS AGAINST ME-- FOR THEIR POWER SOURCE IS UNDER MYSTICAL LOCK AND KEY!
I--I... COMPLY, G-GREAT TYBALD...
OH, IF ONLY HE-WHO-I-- KNOWLEDGE, THE GREAT WIZARD LUGULBANDA, KNEW OF OUR PLIGHT...
FAR DISTANT, IN A PLACE CALLED FEN-RA...
I KNOW YOUR TORTURED THOUGHTS, PARALOX-- AND I, LUGULBANDA, DO KNOW OF THAT WHICH THREATENS YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE...
FURTHERMORE, THOUGH HE IS BUT A MOTE IN THE EYE OF THE UNIVERSE, TYBALD IS CAUSING GREAT HARM TO THE FABRIC OF REALITY!
'TIS TIME I DEPARTED FOR EVEDNILE! FOR I MUST BE THERE FOR THE INEVITABLE ENDING OF THE QUEST!
COUNTLESS WORLDS AWAY...
NO...NO! FOR SLAIN FARR'S SAKE I CANNOT GIVE UP! THERE IS A WAY-- THERE MUST BE!


EACH TIME THE SWIRLING BLACKNESS HAS OPENED BEFORE, IT WAS DUE TO A SURGE OF ENERGY...
EMBED YOUR ARMS IN THE MOUNTAIN-THAT-IS-A-MASQUE, FACELESS ONES... AND PRAY THAT THIS POWERFUL LIGHTNING--
--STRIKES!!
INDEED, THE MYSTIC FORCE OPENS WIDE THE DIMENSIONAL DOORS.
...AND SENDS THE PRINCESS AND HER PRIZE--HOME!
PARAGWEN! DAUGHTER!
I HAVE ARRIVED.. BUT ALL EYES ARE ON THE PRINCESS! NOW COMES THE FINALE!
IT WORKED! I HAVE IT! PREPARE FOR DEFEAT, EVIL TYBALD!

SAVE YOUR THREATS -- I AM PREPARED WITH A BURST OF MY NEW POWERON WEAPON!
OHH-- MY WHOLE NERVOUS SYSTEM'S GONE NUMB!
MY SWORD! THE MASQUE-- NOOOO!
HA HA HA HA HA!
IT IS MINE! THE LEGENDARY MASQUE OF MOTTAGAMMA --THAT GRANTS ITS WEARER ABSOLUTE POWER OVER ALL WHO GAZE UPON IT!
AND STAR HOOK, THE ENCHANTED SWORD! SOON I SHALL LEARN ITS SECRET ENCHANTMENT...
BY THE SOUL OF HE-WHO-DREAMS! LUGULBANDA, HE-WHO-IS-KNOWLEDGE...
...HE SHALL BE THE FIRST!
OBEY ME, WIZARD--YOU ARE MINE TO COMMAND!
THE MASQUE... TOO STRONG ...I CANNOT RESIST!
I STILL DEFY YOU, TYBALD!
EH--?!
VERY WELL, PRINCESS... BUT YOU SHALL NOT FALL UNDER THE SPELL OF THE MASQUE...

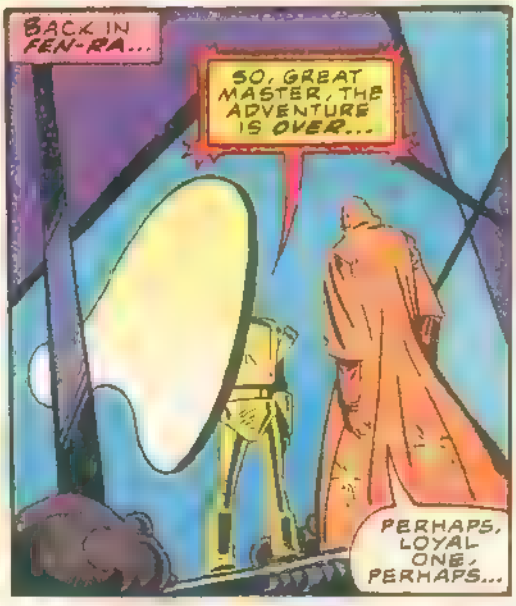

PRINCESS, I SHALL PROTECT YOU AND--!
NO, LOYAL FRIEND... I HAVE ELECTED TO FACE THIS TYRANT ALONE!
HE KNOWS NOT THE POWER OF MY STAR HOOK! AND THAT LACK SHALL DESTROY HIM!
YOU ARE TOO REBELLIOUS TO LIVE EVEN UNDER THE MASQUE'S POWER! YOU MUST DIE!
NOW FEEL STAR HOOK AS IT--EH?! THE BLADE ELONGATES!
NOW YOU SHALL SEE, TYBALD-- THIS IS THE MAGIC OF MY SWORD--!
IT CANNOT HARM THE RIGHTEOUS! AND IF EVER SO COMMANDED, IT WILL STRIKE OUT AT THOSE WHO WILLED EVIL--!
NO--NOOOO! AGGARR-RRRGG!!
YOU--YOU THINK YOU...HAVE WON, PRINCESS... BUT...NO...
I MAY DIE... BUT THE POWER OF... THE MASQUE... SHALL... BE...MY... VENGEANCE--

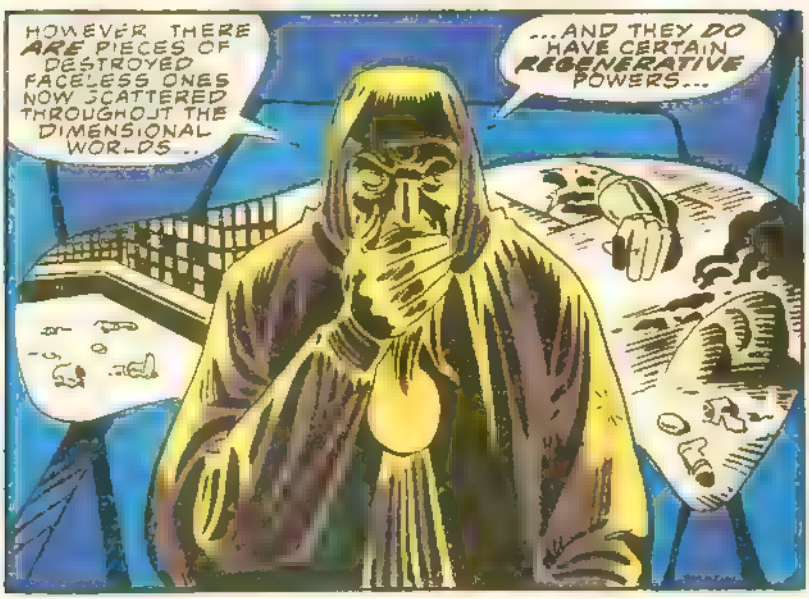
I... I AM AWARE! NOW I... SEE! I AM... FREE AND...
...AND I FEEL ANGER AND HATE! HATE! HATE!!
YOU, WIZARD--YOU MADE US SLAVES! AND YOU, GIRL, YOU LET US DIE ON YOUR FOOLISH QUEST! I SHALL DESTROY YOU ALL!
MOLD: TRAITOR! YOU SHALL NOT PREVAIL!
THE WOUNDED FACELESS ONE WHO HAS GAINED HUMAN FEATURES PROVES HIS LOYALTY AS HE ATTACKS AND DEFENDS... AND AS THE BATTLE RAGES, THE GOLDEN PROTECTOR CHANGES... AND CHANGES--!
WHAT IS HAPPENING TO HIM...?
MY DEAR PARAGWEN... YOU'RE IN FOR A SURPRISE!
FARR!! ALIVE! BUT HOW--?!
I'VE DONE IT! AGAINST ALL ODDS, I'VE DESTROYED THE MASQUE OF MOTTAGAMMA!

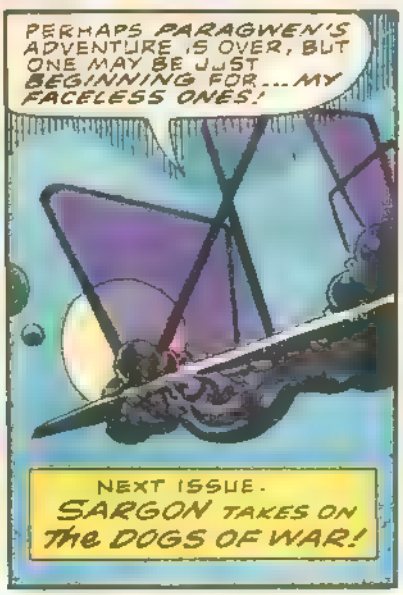

OH, LUGULBANDA... WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED HERE? I AM AT A LOSS..
WHEN I ACTIVATED MY FACELESS ONES FOR HER AID, I USED RESIDUAL ENERGY THAT CLUNG TO YOUR DAUGHTER...
...THAT ENERGY WAS FARR, WHOM SHE BELIEVED DESTROYED BY THE MASQUE'S GUARDIANS, THE WINGED ONES...

I MADE THE BOY HER SERVANT TO TEACH HIM SOME MUCH-NEEDED HUMILITY!
AND I HAD TO STOP TYBALD BECAUSE, AS A PEBBLE CAUSES RINGLETS OF WATER 'CROSS AN ENTIRE POND...
...SO WOULD TYBALD'S EVIL HAVE SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE COSMOS...

BUT ENOUGH WASTED TALK! TIME FOR YOU TO RE-BUILD...
...AND FOR ME TO DEPART!


BACK IN FEN-RA...
SO, GREAT MASTER, THE ADVENTURE IS OVER...
PERHAPS, LOYAL ONE, PERHAPS...


HOWEVER, THERE ARE PIECES OF DESTROYED FACELESS ONES NOW SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE DIMENSIONAL WORLDS..
...AND THEY DO HAVE CERTAIN REGENERATIVE POWERS...


PERHAPS PARAGWEN'S ADVENTURE IS OVER, BUT ONE MAY BE JUST BEGINNING FOR... MY FACELESS ONES!
NEXT ISSUE.
SARGON TAKES ON The DOGS OF WAR!

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